

Preserve Wisconsin's hunting and fishing heritage

First license fee increase in 7 years proposed



- Wisconsin proposes increasing hunting and fishing license fees for the first time in seven years.
- The fee increase is needed to cover rising fish and wildlife management costs. Fees normally rise every four years to cover rising costs. Careful management of fish and wildlife money and alternate funding prevented an earlier hike.
- The fee proposal includes \$6 million in alternative revenue over the biennium to support fish and wildlife programs.
- This proposal reduces DNR spending \$7.8 million over the next two years, recognizing the need to hold fee increases as low as possible.

Funding gap due to lack of fee increase in seven years, outside factors

Hunting and fishing licenses provide the lion's share of money to the Fish & Wildlife Account that pays for conservation programs. **Fees haven't increased in 7 years; normally they go up about every four years to cover rising costs of managing fish and wildlife in Wisconsin.**

Careful management of Fish & Wildlife Account money and tribal gaming money allowed DNR to avoid increasing fees earlier. But now, **costs have finally caught up and the funding gap is worsening because of several factors beyond DNR's control, including:**

- The discovery of chronic wasting disease in Wisconsin contributed to a decrease in deer hunting licenses, worsening the deficit. The proposed license fee increase will not be used to pay for CWD management. \$1.5 million annually from tribal gaming revenues will cover CWD costs in the budget.
- A sluggish economy has cut investment income normally generated on Fish & Wildlife Account funds before they're spent by about \$1.2 million.
- Legislative action shifted the annual cost of 13 wardens (\$1.0 million) to the Fish & Wildlife Account to ease the general purpose revenue deficit. The Legislature also authorized a new transaction fee for license agents but no new revenues were provided – an annual \$1.0 million impact.

Result? A projected \$17 million funding gap in each 2004 and 2005.



**Projected Revenues:
\$56.9 million**

**Projected Expenditures*
\$74 million**

*to maintain current services

Safeguards exist to protect Fish & Wildlife Account Funds from misuse

Any increase in fishing and hunting license fees will only go to support existing conservation programs, not new ones. **There are strict limits on how that money can be spent.**

- **License money cannot be used to offset the state's general tax deficit.**
- All fishing and hunting fees are deposited into the Fish & Wildlife Account.
- State statutes and federal regulations prohibit the diversion of fish and game fees to other purposes. Federal and state auditors check the account.
- Funding levels for the various programs are established by the Governor and Legislature through the budget process.
- Statutes limit administrative costs to no more than 16% of Fish and Wildlife expenditures. These are the only funds in state government held to that standard and that provide that accountability to users.
- DNR has had little or no growth in fish and wildlife staff since the 1997 fee increase. At the same time, conservation programs held positions vacant, cut travel, delayed new equipment purchases, and put the future of hunting, fishing and trapping initiative on hold. The agency also eliminated its fish toxicology program, reduced wildlife research and the grassland acreage DNR maintains.

Expected changes in fish and wildlife programs if there is no fee increase

The funding gap in the Fish & Wildlife Account and continued general purpose revenue cuts will require DNR fish and wildlife conservation programs to plan for 25 to 31 percent cuts in their 2003-2005 budgets.

Examples of possible reductions:

- Reduce musky stocking 33 percent, trout stocking 50 percent.
- Close two hatcheries, one weir and outlying ponds.
- Cut trout habitat work 20 percent, warmwater habitat work 50 percent, and surveys 33 percent.
- Cut 10 fish biologists, 15 technicians, 10 hatchery staff.
- Stop habitat management on most Wildlife Management areas and Fisheries areas.
- Close state game farm, which produces 57,000 adult pheasant and 60,000 day-old-chicks for public hunting opportunity.
- Cut time biologists and wardens spend on customer service, responding to clubs/partner organization requests
- Cut 40 full-time warden jobs.
- Reduce wildlife population data collection and reporting.
- Cut 25 full-time customer service and licensing people and reduce hours at eight to 10 DNR service centers.



Some of these impacts will be immediately visible. However, other impacts, like reduced habitat management, stocking and enforcement, won't be visible immediately but will be more difficult and costly to reverse. The impact of reductions will become very apparent in 2005 as the revenue gap widens, affecting a variety of activities, facilities, land, positions and areas of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin license holders get good value for their money... -- and memories to last a lifetime.



Three generations of Kubisiaks enjoy coho fishing on Lake Michigan. In 2002, anglers recorded some of the best trout and salmon fishing in years: they caught 17.9 fish for every 100 hours of fishing – the best rate in more than 18 years.

- Wisconsin ranks in the top five fishing destinations
- Anglers in 2001 caught 50 million fish
- Anglers catch rate on Lake Michigan was 17.9 fish per 100 hours of effort -- the highest rate in 20 years
- Trout anglers can fish 254 new trout streams
- It only takes 3,000 casts to catch a musky instead of 10,000.
- Every year for the last 13 years, Muskie Inc.'s members have caught in Wisconsin waters an average of 29 fish larger than 48 inches and nine muskies larger than 50 inches.
- Spearers continue Lake Winnebago's unique lake sturgeon spearing season.

Since 1997:

- Wild turkey permits increased 80 percent, harvest 90 percent.
- Archery kill up 24 percent, gun kill up 30 percent.
- Bear permit numbers are up 30 percent and harvest 36 percent.
- Wisconsin hunters enjoy seasons that span the year for dozens of species.
- 6 million acres of public land open to hunting, another 1.6 million of private land open through forestry tax programs.

These are just a sampling of the great fishing and hunting opportunities Wisconsin residents and visitors can enjoy.

Dear Wisconsin Anglers and Hunters,

You've worked hard to preserve and enhance Wisconsin's natural resources and to share your hunting and fishing traditions with others. You've given your time, your money, and your voice to help keep Wisconsin's outdoors great.

The fee increase being proposed will help continue the hunting and fishing opportunities we all love. I can assure you that with this fee increase, the DNR will continue working efficiently and effectively so all of you who enjoy Wisconsin's great outdoors will see the value of your increased investment in our natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Scott Hassett".

Scott Hassett
DNR Secretary



DNR Secretary Scott Hassett grew up fishing in Wisconsin with his dad Paul and has taught his own kids how to fish. He loves row trolling for muskies and can tell a good story about the wallhangers he's caught and released.

License Fee Changes Effective March 2004			
All prices include issuance fee of \$0.75/license and \$0.25/stamp.			
	Current Fees	Proposed Fees	Fee Change
FISHING LICENSES			
RESIDENT			
Annual	\$14	\$20	\$6
Husband and wife	\$24	\$35	\$11
Senior Fishing License	\$7	\$10	\$3
Disabled Fishing License	\$7	\$10	\$3
Junior Fishing License (16/17)	\$7	\$7	\$0
NONRESIDENT			
Individual annual	\$34	\$40	\$6
Family annual	\$52	\$65	\$13
Fifteen-day individual	\$20	\$24	\$4
Four-day	\$15	\$18	\$3
Fifteen-day family	\$30	\$40	\$10
Two Day Great Lakes Fishing	\$10	\$14	\$4
STAMPS			
Trout	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$0
Great Lakes trout & salmon	\$7.25	\$10	\$2.75
SPORTS LICENSES			
*Resident Conservation Patron	\$110	\$140	\$30
*Resident Sports License	\$43	\$53	\$10
*Nonresident Patron	\$575	\$600	\$25
*Nonresident Sports	\$250	\$275	\$25
HUNTING LICENSES			
RESIDENT			
*Deer	\$20	\$32	\$12
*Archer	\$20	\$32	\$12
Extra deer permit	\$12	\$12	\$0
*Small game	\$14	\$20	\$6
*Junior Small Game	\$8	\$10	\$2
*Senior Small Game	\$7	\$10	\$3
*Bear pursuit	\$8	\$14	\$6
*Bear harvest	\$41	\$49	\$8
*Wild turkey license	\$11	\$14	\$3
Trapping	\$18	\$20	\$2
NONRESIDENT			
*Deer	\$135	\$160	\$25
*Archer	\$135	\$160	\$25
Extra deer permit	\$20	\$20	\$0
*Annual small game	\$75	\$80	\$5
*Five-day small game	\$43	\$50	\$7
*Bear pursuit	\$100	\$110	\$10
*Bear harvest	\$200	\$250	\$50
Furbearing	\$150	\$160	\$10
*Wild turkey license	\$55	\$60	\$5
Hunting Stamps/Other			
Waterfowl	\$7	\$7	\$0
Wild turkey stamp	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$0
Pheasant Stamp	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$0
Permit Application fee	\$3	\$3	\$0
*Includes \$1 wildlife damage surcharge; Patron license includes \$2 wildlife damage surcharge.			



Fishing Facts

23 percent of Wisconsin adults fished in 2001

All anglers fished 22 million days in Wisconsin in 2001

Anglers spent \$1.22 billion on gear and trips

Fishing:

- ◆ generated \$2.3 billion in economic impact
- ◆ generated \$90 million in taxes
- ◆ supported 26,000 jobs

Hunting Facts

15 percent of Wisconsin adults said they hunted in 2001

Hunting generated:

- ◆ \$1.7 billion in economic impact
- ◆ \$52 million in state sales, fuel and income taxes
- ◆ supported 19,000 jobs



For the price of a fishing lure or a box of ammunition, Wisconsin hunters and anglers can continue enjoying some of the best fishing and hunting in the nation.